

March 4, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC—On March 3, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), voted for H.R. 146, The Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefield Protection Act, which passed the House by a vote of 394-13. The measure amends the American Battlefield Protection Act of 1996 to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish an acquisition grant program for battlefields and associated sites identified in a report by the National Park Service.

“As the Representative of a richly historic region of our country, and whose district includes the Brandywine Battlefield State Park, I’m pleased that we’re taking the necessary steps to preserve our heritage,” said Congressman Sestak. “This bill will help state and local governments get access to the funding they need to protect America’s history.”

The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide grants to states or local governments to pay the federal share of the cost of acquiring fee-simple or lesser interests from willing sellers in sites described in the “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States.” It permits governments to acquire an interest in eligible sites using grants in partnership with nonprofit organizations, while requiring that the non-federal share of the cost of acquisitions must be no less than 50 percent of the total cost. Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, lands acquired through this program must be used only for public outdoor recreation uses, unless otherwise approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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